

Week 6 2/12-2/16	--“That’s not funny!” The politics of humor --Class, Race & Gender in “Everyday Use”	IRP #7: “The Catbird Seat” IRP #8: “Everyday Use”
Week 7 2/19-2/23	--Creole culture in Chopin’s stories -- <i>Antigone</i> and Civil Disobedience	IRP #9: <i>Bayou Folk</i> IRP #10: <i>Antigone</i>
Week 8 2/26-3/2	--Biographical v. Sociological Interpretation --Groundwork for the research paper	Draft of paper #2 due Paper #2 Due
Week 9 3/5-9	SPRING BREAK	
Week 10 3/12-3/16	Library 102 Orientation [meet in Library] Begin Unit 3: Formalist Interpretation	Research Paper Topic due

MONDAY:

Prep: IRP #8 Walker

Due: IRP #7

Assign: IRP #8

Discussion:

1. Quick walk through: Thurber throws the readers some curveballs....
2. Finding the funny...



Why is the story less funny (or not funny at all) to modern readers than it was in the mid-Twentieth century?

Point of comparison: Eddie Murphy’s opening in *Delirious* (1983):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMSL4weVgyY> [start at 4 min.] (From “funny” to “homophobic”)

3. A feminist reading of the story. Female power in the “boy’s club”?
 4. Point of comparison: “The Unicorn in the Garden”
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The Unicorn in the Garden



by James Thurber

reprinted from
Fables For Our Time

Once upon a sunny morning a man who sat in a breakfast nook looked up from his scrambled eggs to see a white unicorn with a golden horn quietly cropping the roses in the garden. The man went up to the bedroom where his wife was still asleep and woke her. "There's a unicorn in the garden," he said. "Eating roses." She opened one unfriendly eye and looked at him.

"The unicorn is a mythical beast," she said, and turned her back on him. The man walked slowly downstairs and out into the garden. The unicorn was still there; now he was browsing among the tulips. "Here, unicorn," said the man, and he pulled up a lily and gave it to him. The unicorn ate it gravely. With a high heart, because there was a unicorn in his garden, the man went upstairs and roused his wife again. "The unicorn," he said, "ate a lily." His wife sat up in bed and looked at him coldly. "You are a

booby," she said, "and I am going to have you put in the booby-hatch."

The man, who had never liked the words "booby" and "booby-hatch," and who liked them even less on a shining morning when there was a unicorn in the garden, thought for a moment. "We'll see about that," he said. He walked over to the door. "He has a golden horn in the middle of his forehead," he told her. Then he went back to the garden to watch the unicorn; but the unicorn had gone away. The man sat down among the roses and went to sleep.

As soon as the husband had gone out of the house, the wife got up and dressed as fast as she could. She was very excited and there was a gloat in her eye. She telephoned the police and she telephoned a psychiatrist; she told them to hurry to her house and bring a strait-jacket. When the police and the psychiatrist arrived they sat down in chairs and looked at her, with great interest.

"My husband," she said, "saw a unicorn this morning." The police looked at the psychiatrist and the psychiatrist looked at the police. "He told me it ate a lilly," she said. The psychiatrist looked at the police and the police looked at the psychiatrist. "He told me it had a golden horn in the middle of its forehead," she said. At a solemn signal from the psychiatrist, the police leaped from their chairs and seized the wife. They had a hard time subduing her, for she put up a terrific struggle, but they finally subdued her. Just as they got her into the strait-jacket, the husband came back into the house.

"Did you tell your wife you saw a unicorn?" asked the police. "Of course not," said the husband. "The unicorn is a mythical beast." "That's all I wanted to know," said the psychiatrist. "Take her away. I'm sorry, sir, but your wife is as crazy as a jaybird."

So they took her away, cursing and screaming, and shut her up in an institution. The husband lived happily ever after.

Moral: Don't count your boobies until they are hatched.

WEDNESDAY:

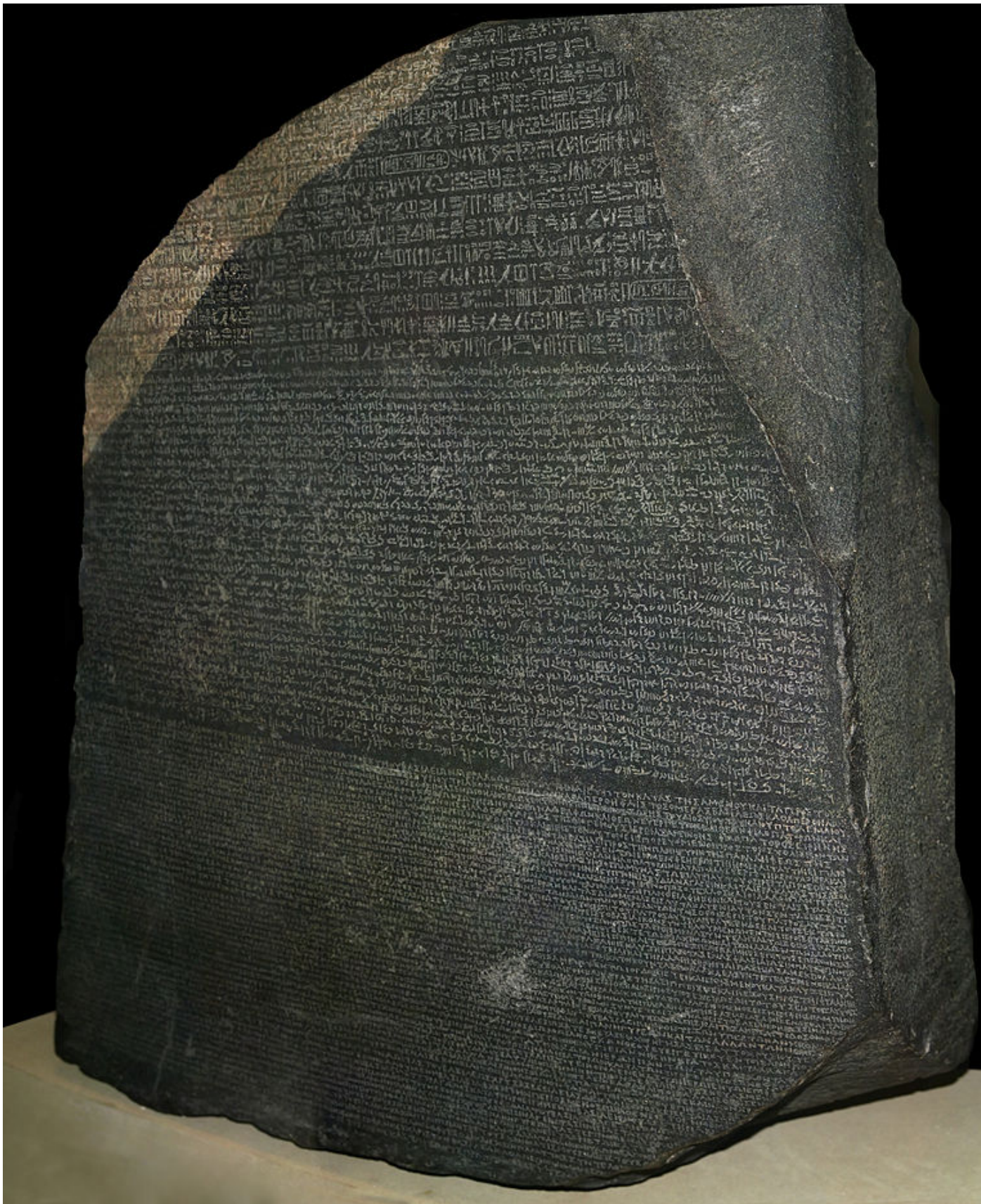
Prep: IRP #9 & 10; first wave of paper #1 returns; hieroglyphics handout; grade distribution tally

Due: IRP #8

Assign: IRP #9 Kate Chopin

Discussion:

1. Responding to the feedback on your first essay
 - hieroglyphics/rosetta stone
 - what to expect from the comments/grade on your paper
 - how to respond to the comments/grade on your paper



2. Review of the principles behind sociological interpretation:

Changing the definition of *meaning* changes the act of interpretation (goal was “intent”; goal is now the politics of the text)

“The reader” isn’t neutral. In our ‘default setting’ idea of **the reader**, what assumptions are made? What’s the ‘vanilla’ reader, and why do we assume that stance as normal? What happens to the meaning if we select a different ‘flavor’?

3. “Everyday Use”

Culture clash?

Race—what does it mean to “be Black” in this story?

Socio-economic class—what *is* class, and how does it play out in the conflict of the story? What does class have to do with objects put to ‘everyday use’?

Understanding the commentary on your papers

Signs, symbols, & shorthand

- (dot) = one (1) *unmarked* basic writing error somewhere on that line
 - basic writing errors: spelling, typos, punctuation errors, etc.
 - potentially raise your grade (!) by penciling in corrections
- (squiggle underline) = wording problem
 - most often, wording is too **informal**
 - sometimes indicates confusing/awkward wording
- (crossed out words) = don't need this; wasted words
 - I often delete "I think," "I feel," "I believe"; just say/support it!
- ('bridge' curved line) = better transition needed here
 - typically, too abrupt movement from one sent. to next
- (?) = a '**huh?**' from your reader
 - may indicate that I don't understand what you're saying
 - may indicate that I'm thinking, "you can't really mean this...."

Short, terse comments

- (be precise) = your statement is too vague or ambiguous
 - e.g. "thing" is imprecise; "object," is more precise
 - choose the most exact word to say just what you mean
- (specify) = you need to add a specific example or other details
 - "specify" does not mean that I disagree; I just want support
- (for ex.?) = you need to provide specific examples of this (see 'specify')
- (convince me) = you have written a statement that requires support
 - this does not mean what you wrote is incorrect
 - this does mean you need to add evidence to support the claim
- (tighten) = it is taking you too much space to say this
- (combine sentences) = blend two (or more) sent. into one
 - may indicate need to improve the 'flow' of writing
 - may indicate wasted words
- (B/A, C/B, etc.) = split grades are ½-way in between the two marks
 - a B/A is a 3.5, while a B+ is a 3.3 & an A- is a 3.7